



City of
Rockville
Get Into It

**Historic District Commission Staff Report:
Evaluation of Significance (for Demolition)
HDC2013-00602, 301 Park Road**

MEETING DATE: 10/18/12

REPORT DATE: 10/11/12

FROM: Robin D. Ziek, Preservation Planner,
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APPLICATION DESCRIPTION: Evaluation of Historic Significance
(demolition proposed)

APPLICANT: Janice Asaka
14425 Parkvale Road #8
Rockville, MD 20853

FILING DATE: 9/14/12

RECOMMENDATION: Staff finds that the property at 301 Park Road does not meet HDC criteria for historic designation, in that it is not associated with a significant historic event, person, or pattern of events as detailed in Rockville's historic contexts, and does not exemplify Rockville's mid-20th century architecture or heritage.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Janice Asaka filed an evaluation request on 9/14/12. Per 25.14.d 1 of the Zoning Ordinance, the HDC will evaluate a property for historic significance if the owner contemplates full demolition of the dwelling and so requests. Staff provides historic research and makes a recommendation to the HDC concerning the historic significance of the subject property.



Table of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| RECOMMENDATION | 3 |
| SITE DESCRIPTION..... | 3 |
| Vicinity | 3 |
| Site Analysis: | 4 |
| HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:..... | 6 |
| COMMUNITY OUTREACH | 12 |
| FINDINGS..... | 12 |
| ATTACHMENTS | |
| A Aerial Map | |
| B Zoning Map | |
| C Aerial Detail of property | |
| D Application | |
| E Large scale maps, photos | |

Letters received - none



RECOMMENDATION

Staff finds that the property at 301 Park Road does not meet HDC criteria for historic designation, in that it is not associated with a significant historic event, person, or pattern of events as detailed in Rockville's historic contexts, and does not exemplify Rockville's mid-20th century architecture or heritage.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Location: 301 Park Road (see Attachment 1)

Applicant: Janice Asaka

Land Use Designation: Detached Residential (High Density)

Zoning District: R-60 (see Attachment 2)

Existing Use: Single Unit Detached Residential

Parcel Area: 11,200 sf

Subdivision: Croydon Park: Block H, Pts Lots 1 - 5

Building Floor Area: 858 sf

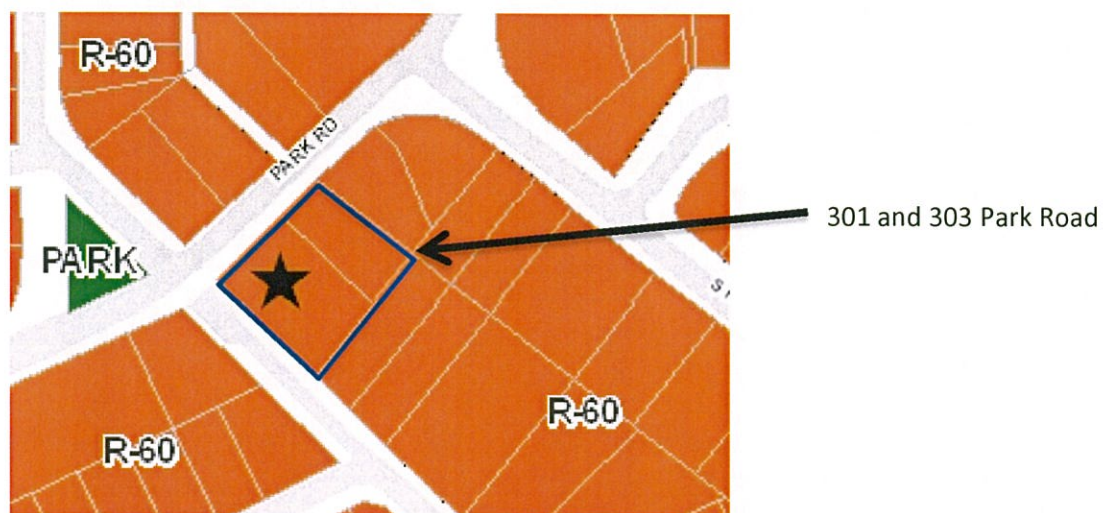
Dwelling Units: 1

Vicinity

| Surrounding Land Use and Zoning | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Location | Zoning | Planned Land Use | Existing Use |
| North | R-60 | Detached Residential High Density | Detached Residential High Density |
| East | R-60 | Detached Residential High Density | Detached Residential High Density |
| South | R-60 | Detached Residential High Density | Detached Residential High Density |
| West | R-60 | Detached Residential High Density | Detached Residential High Density |

**Site Analysis:**

The subject property is located in Croydon Park at the corner of Grandin Avenue and Park Road. At this location, Grandin Avenue has been closed off to prevent cross traffic. This corner property is composed of half of five narrow lots that run parallel to Park Road. It was created by deed rather than through a subdivision plat, and the division created another lot for the house at 303 Park Road. The subject house under review faces Park Road while the garage is accessed from Grandin Avenue. The entire property is enclosed with a chain-link fence.



The neighborhood lies just east of the railroad tracks, and Park Road is the only through road connection in the neighborhood to the Town Center area, with a tunnel under the railroad tracks. The neighborhood was platted in the early 20th century, and many of the houses date to the 1930s and 1940s. Several of the neighboring houses have been enlarged with second story additions built upon the structure of the original one or one-and one-half story house.

The park across the street was dedicated in 2003 to the memory of local resident and poet, Mary Trumbo, after she was killed crossing MD 355 in 2001. The triangular park provides a well-landscaped public space for the surrounding residential community, as well as serving as a gateway to East Rockville.

The subject property is comprised of five partial lots containing a total of 11,200 sf. The house and garage were constructed without reference to the individual lot lines, and the entire property will have to be re-subdivided and recorded as a buildable lot before new construction can proceed. There is a mid-size Black Locust tree in the front yard (*Robinia pseudoacacia*, native to the southeastern US, in the subfamily [Faboideae](#) of the pea family [Fabaceae](#)), but the property is generally flat and open.

Front (N) and left side (E) elevations



Rear (S) and right side (W) elevations



This is a 1940 one-1/2 story Minimal Traditional front-gable cottage, with a small projecting ell at the west corner. The front elevation is three bay, with the door located in the west corner, between the large and small blocks of the house. All of the gable ends on the house (north, west and south facades) are clad in vertical siding, while the remainder of the house is clad in aluminum siding. The original wood windows have been retained, and are 3/1 double hung sash, with metal storm windows. The 1/2-light front door, with 3 vertical lights, is protected with an ornamental hood with curving "brackets." The back door has a concrete stoop, with a small enclosed porch. On the west elevation, a sliding glass door has been installed, which opens up to a small open deck. There is a single car detached garage at the south end of the property, with a driveway. The garage has horizontal siding (which is likely on the house underneath the aluminum siding), and two board doors that swing open. Windows have been cut into the garage elevations and into both doors. The wood frame garage sits on a block foundation.

Garage: Front (W) and left side (N) elevations



Overall property, looking southeast



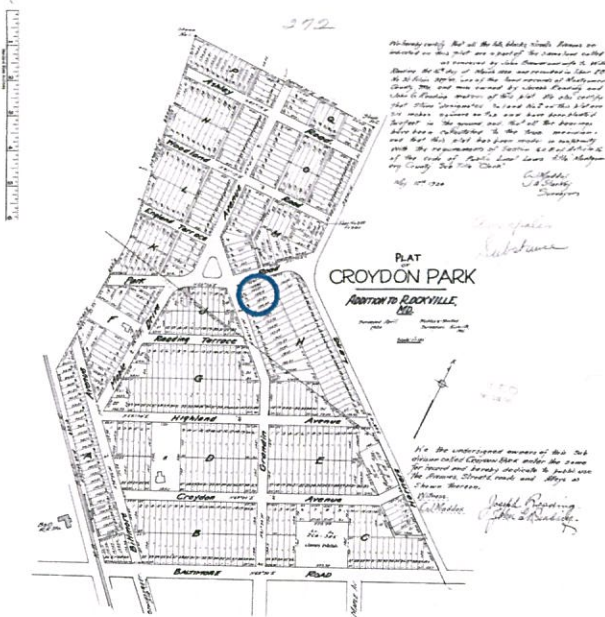
Historic Significance:

We hereby certify that all the lots, blocks, streets, Avenues &c. indicated on this plat are a part of the same land called as conveyed by John Brewer and wife to William Reading the 16th day of March 1884, and recorded in Liber E.B.P. No 36 Folios 387 &c; one of the land records of Montgomery County, Md, and now owned by Joseph Reading and John G. Reading makers of this plat. We also certify that Stone designated No 1 and No 2 on this plat are six inches square on top and have been planted two feet in the ground, and, that all the bearings have been calculated to the true meridian, and that this plat has been made in conformity with the requirements of Section 60 B. of Article 16. of the Code of Public Local Laws title "Montgomery County Sub Title "Clerk"

May 12th 1924

*C. J. Maddox
J. N. Sharkey
Surveyors*

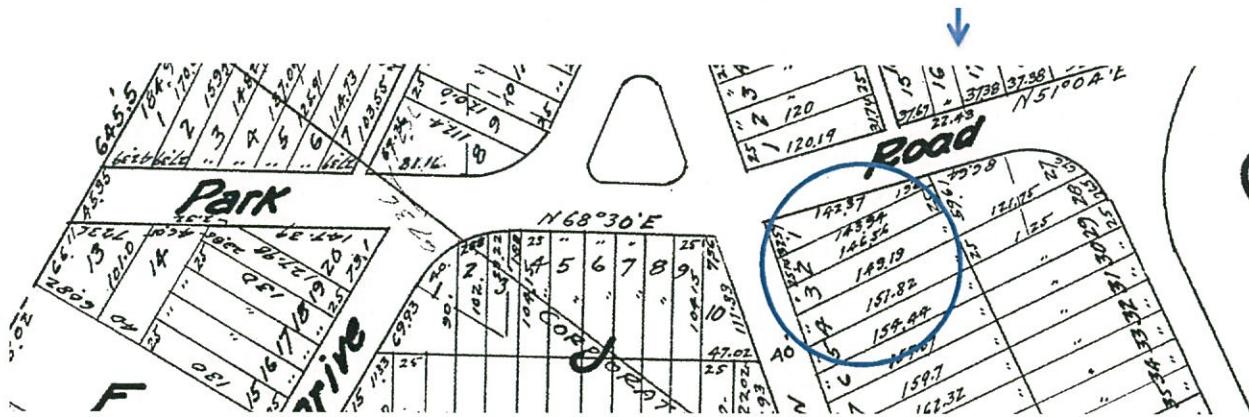
The property was subdivided in 1924 by Joseph Reading (a former Mayor of Rockville who lived on Croydon Avenue), and platted with the recordation of the Croydon Park subdivision. Deed research indicates that, by 1938, Robert W. Mills was the owner of lots 1-5, in Block H. Soon thereafter, Robert W. Mills divided the properties roughly in half, and sold both portions to his brother and brother's wife, John R. & Sylvia Mills.



Croydon Park extended from the Rockville Park Subdivision to England's 2nd Addition to Rockville

(Beginning on the north side of Baltimore Road and extending north to include all the properties on Ashley Road).

SUBDIVISION DETAIL



After the recordation of the Croydon Park subdivision in 1924, properties were slowly sold off by the Readings. Lots 4-5 were sold quickly to a local family, Raleigh S. Chinn, who was living on West Montgomery Avenue at the time (see MHT research form on 531 W. Montgomery Avenue). The undeveloped property changed hands four times between 1924-1938. In 1938, Robert W. Mills purchased lots 1-5, in two distinct transactions (L687/354; L698/286).

The Mills family, represented by George O. and Catherine Mills, Robert W. Mills (unmarried), and John R. and Sylvia L. Mills, was active in real estate and development of East Rockville in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. They all participated in the resubdivision and redevelopment of the subject property.

Robert W. Mills purchased lots 1-3 (1937) and lots 4-5 (1938), and thereby assembled all five lots under single ownership. Robert W. Mills undertook a division of the property into easterly and westerly portions by deed. He sold the westerly portion to John R. and Sylvia Mills at the end of July, 1938. On the same day of

purchase, John and Sylvia Mills took out a mortgage on the property for \$1,500, which was apparently needed to construct the subject house.

Robert W. Mills sold the easterly portion to John R and Sylvia Mills in August, 1938; and they sold the property to George and Catherine Mills in February, 1939. Before proceeding with development of the property for a single family house, the Mills secured water and sewer service to the property from Rockville, even though the property was outside of the corporate limits of the "Town of Rockville" (L790/311 - 1940).

On April 3, 1941, George and Catherine Mills took out a mortgage for \$1,500 on the easterly ½ of lots 1-5 (at 2:12 pm); and then sold the property to Lester G. Trumbo (at 2:13 pm); and offered a mortgage (\$625) to Lester G. Trumbo (at 2:14 pm).¹

| Liber/Folio | Date | Grantor | Grantee |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Westerly ½ of lots 1-5 | | | |
| 13301/707 | 3/16/1995 | Kamran Gohari | Thomas LaValla (\$105,000) |
| 9661/659 | | Estate of Helen A. Winning (d. 1/2/1991) and Richard O. Winning (d. 5/13/1977) | Kamran Gohari (\$108,000) |
| 1294/464 | 9/29/1949 | Ralph S. Embrey | Richard O. Winning |
| 985/205 | 10/19/1945 | George O. Jarrels & Margaret H. Jarrels | Ralph S. Embrey (takes out mortgage for \$6,000 @4% annum, to be repaid in \$50 monthly increments) |
| 816/234 | 2/13/1941 | John R. & Sylvia L. Mills | George O. Jarrels & Margaret H. Jarrels |
| 706/470 | 7/23/1938 | Robert W. Mills (unmarried) | John R. & Sylvia Mills |
| Easterly ½ of lots 1-5 | | | |
| 822/16 | 4/3/1941 | George O. and Catherine N. Mills | Lester G. Trumbo |
| 728/95 | 2/23/1939 | John R. & Sylvia Mills | George O. and Catherine N. Mills |
| 708/268 | 8/30/1938 | Robert W. Mills | John R. & Sylvia Mills |

¹ The siting of Mary Trumbo Park is, therefore, in close proximity to a property where she lived.

| | | | |
|---|------------|---|------------------------|
| Lots 1-5 | | | |
| 687/354 Lots 1-3 | 12/30/1937 | John G. Reading | Robert W. Mills |
| 698/286 (Lots 4-5) | 5/12/1938 | Elsie N. Thompson | Robert W. Mills |
| 484/5 (Lots 4-5) | 5/14/1929 | John Vinson Peter & wife Gertrude | Elsie Thompson |
| 404/227 (Lots 4-5) | 3/21/1925 | Raleigh S. Chinn | J. Vinson Peter & wife |
| 352/396 (Lots 4-5) Covenants against sale to African Americans | 5/13/1924 | Joseph Reading, John G. and Louise Reading | Raleigh S. Chinn |

John and Sylvia Mills took out a mortgage on the westerly $\frac{1}{2}$ of lots 1-5 (the subject property) in July 23, 1938, on the same day that they purchased the property from Robert W. Mills. The mortgage was offered by William E. Heim (who lived on Baltimore Road) in the amount of \$1,500. They apparently constructed the subject house between 1938-1941, and then sold the subject property to George O. & Margaret H. Jarrels in February of 1941. The Jarrels in turn sold the property in 1945 to Ralph S. Embrey, who took out a \$6,000 mortgage to cover the costs of the transaction.

The house is shown on the 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, which also shows that the neighborhood was between generally built out at this time. Prior to 1949, the neighborhood was in Montgomery County, but the property serves as an example to illustrate that the Town of Rockville supplied public water and sewer from the Town water system, centered on the Pump House on S. Horners Lane, to this area upon request (L790/311, 1940). With the mass annexation of 1949, the entire neighborhood was brought into the corporate limits of the Town of Rockville.

Sanborn Map 1949



An evaluation of historic significance begins with a historic context. For the City of Rockville, the *Historic Resources Management Plan* (1986) provides a series of seven historic contexts. This property falls within Contexts #6 and #7. The property was platted for development in 1924, at a time when many of the close-in farms were subdivided for new houses. This important aspect of Rockville's history is analyzed in "Historic Context #6: Maturation and Expansion of the County Seat: 1873-1931." This context focuses on the suburban development of Rockville after the Metropolitan Branch of the B&O Railroad opened in 1873. Croydon Park is included in the general discussion of the platting of suburban lots in this area from 1893 – 1931 (p. 127), but no individual sites are mentioned or suggested for further research.

The development history of East Rockville is more fully presented in the *Rockville Park National Register Nomination*, which details the slow pace of development in East Rockville in the years after the railroad station opened. Croydon Park was platted only once Joseph Reading moved out of Rockville to live with his son in Chevy Chase (1924).²

Historic Context #7 covers the years from 1931 – present (1986). By this time, the private automobile was becoming commonplace, and the focus of development was on the large-tract subdivisions such as Twinbrook and Hungerford that were further away from the railroad line. These subdivisions were formatted as largescale Levittown-style developments. The subject property was developed on a smaller scale but on this model, with the Mills buying property and building houses and selling them to new property owners.

The Mills family is associated with the construction of several homes in this neighborhood, including 300 Park Road (their personal residence); 304 and 306 S. Horners Lane; 301 and 302 Park Road; 304, 404 and 408 Reading Avenue; 721 and 723 Maple Avenue; 730 Grandin Avenue; and 421 MacArthur Drive. They also developed properties in Kensington View and Rockwood (see *Rockville Park National Register nomination*, p. 8-28).

Context #7 lacks a discussion of Rockville during the war years, and this might be further researched in a second edition of this management plan. The City also lacks an updated 20th century context, but the recently published *Historic Buildings Catalog* provides a citywide architectural survey that does includes 20th century houses. The subject property is included in this publication (p.86) and is an example of the Minimal Traditional house common in the mid-20th century.

² *Rockville Park NR Nomination*, page 8-15.

Historic designation is recommended if a property meets one or more of the HDC's adopted Criteria. A staff review of these criteria, with staff evaluations, is provided below.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION CRITERIA

The following checklist is used to assist in evaluating the significance of nominated properties. Standing structures and sites, including archaeological sites, must be determined to be significant in one or more of the following criteria to be found eligible for historic designation:

I. Historical and cultural significance:

- A. Event: the site of a significant historic event
No.
- B. Person: identified with a person or a group of persons who influenced society
No. The Mills (George, Robert and John) developed mid-20th century residential architecture in and around Rockville, but did not influence society as much as participate in typical trends of the period.
- C. Pattern of Events: exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities
No. The property is an example of the development of a suburban lot at the edge of the Town of Rockville, but is only one of many Minimal Traditional cottages in Rockville.
- D. Cultural Value: has character, interest, or value as part of the development, or cultural heritage of the City, County, State, Nation
No.

II. Architectural and design significance:

- A. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction
No. The building is an example of a ubiquitous type of residential construction.
- B. Represents the work of a master
No.
- C. Possesses high artistic values
No.
- D. Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
N/A If this were proposed as part of a larger suburban district, this property could be considered a Contributing Resource, but this criterion only applies to a multiple property nomination.
- E. Represents an established or familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or county due to its singular physical characteristic or landscape.
No. There are no unusual physical characteristics of the property.

Historic Integrity of structure and site:

- *Alterations to house: exterior siding, front and rear stoops, side deck, sliding glass doors, block foundation for garage)*

Level of site significance: *N/A*

* * * * *

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Posting of sign on property two weeks prior to meeting

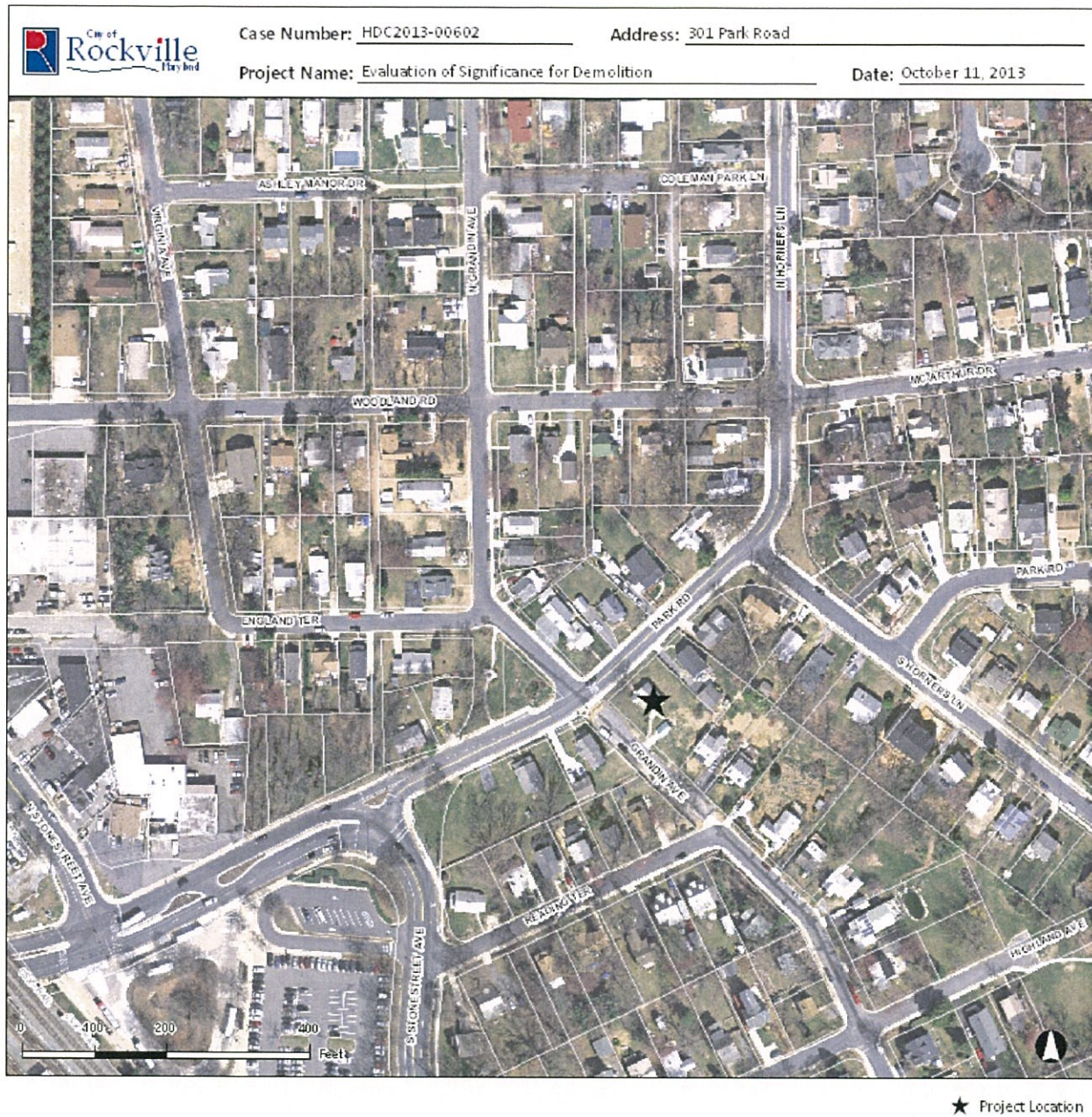
Postcard notices sent out two weeks prior to meeting

Staff report posted on City's web site one week prior to meeting

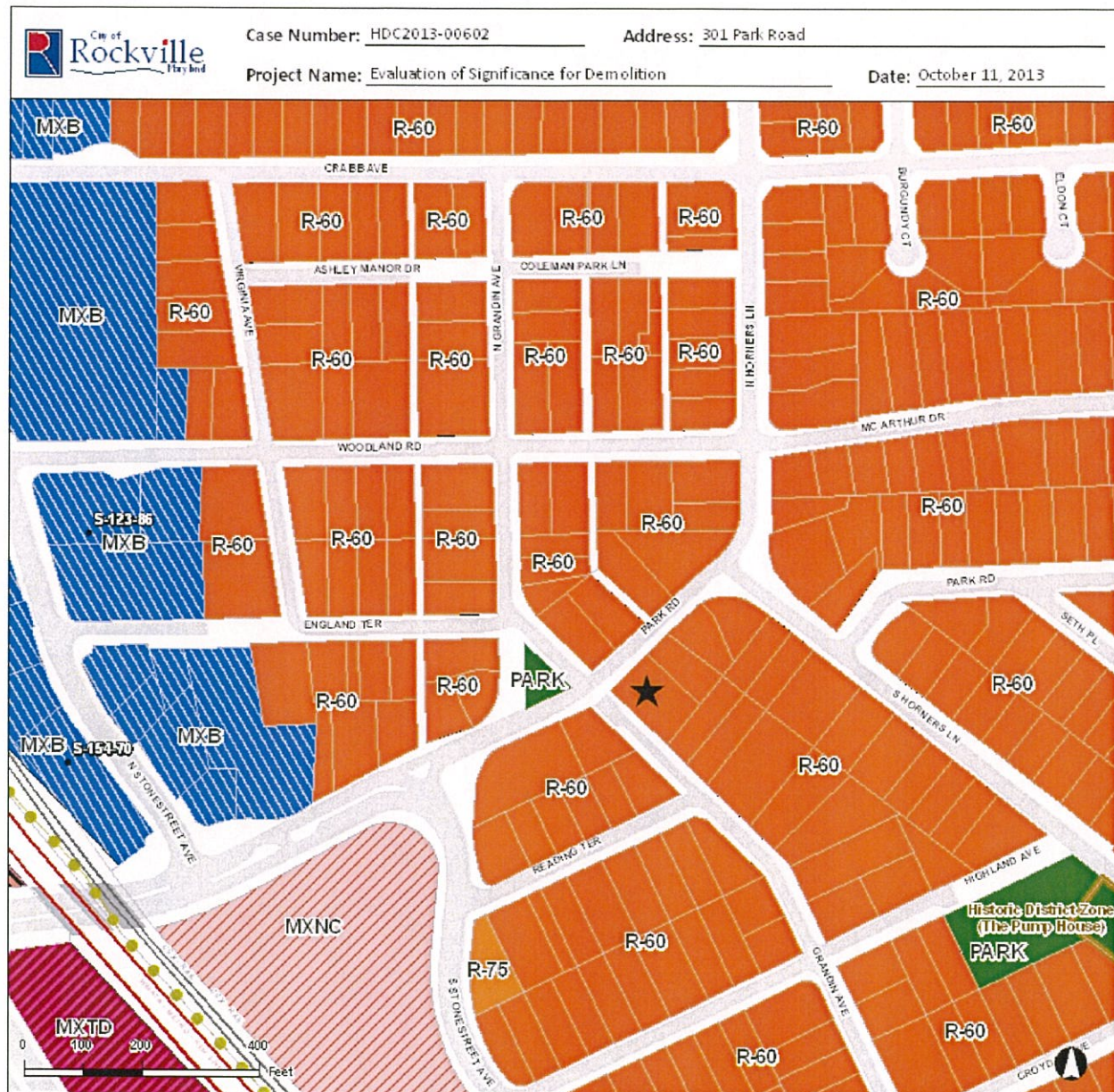
FINDINGS

Finding that the property does not meet the Criteria for Historic Significance (as reviewed above), staff recommends that the HDC does not recommend this property for historic designation.

AERIAL MAP



ZONING MAP



AERIAL DETAIL

